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Advocacy Blogging: Writing & Editing for the Public

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Advocacy Blogging: Writing & Editing for the Public

Abstract

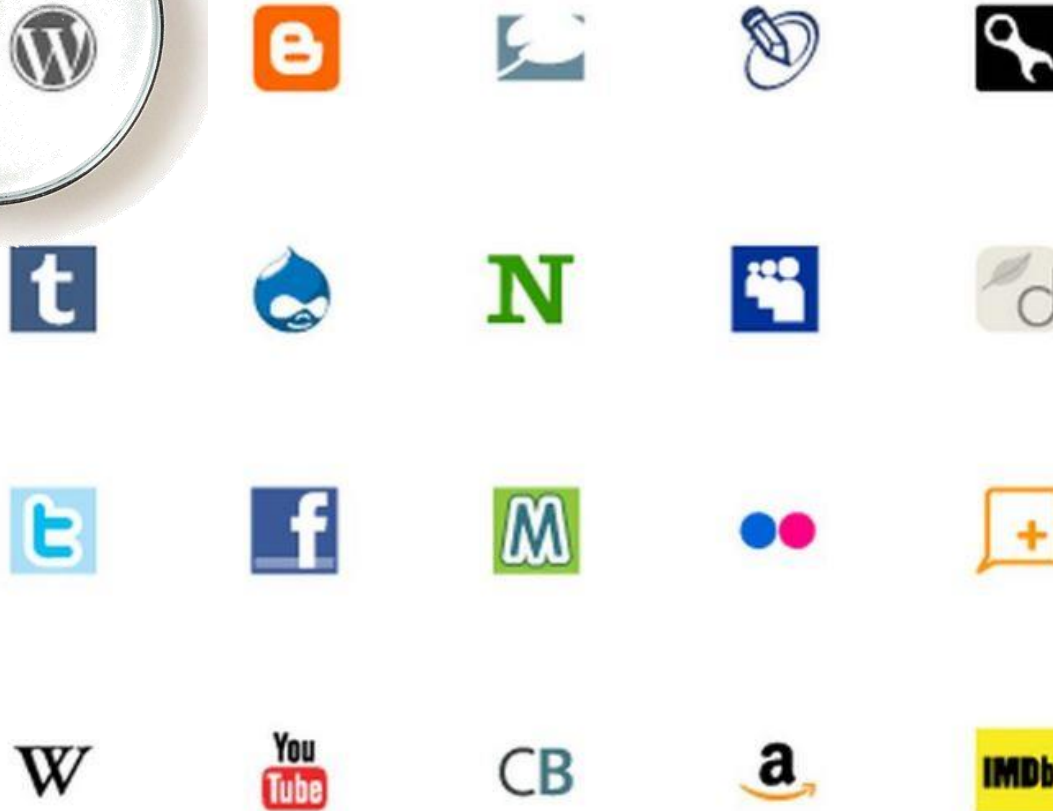
Presentation given as part of a faculty workshop at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa, on January 9, 2015, about advocacy blogging which is based on a previously published article (available at <http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/wte/vol3/iss1/10/>).

Keywords

advocacy blogging, authentic writing instruction

Disciplines

Curriculum and Instruction | Rhetoric and Composition | Teacher Education and Professional Development



Advocacy Blogging: Writing & Editing for the Public

Leah Zuidema, Ph.D. ◦ Dordt College ◦ January 9, 2015

A presentation...about an article...about editing an advocacy blog...about authentic writing instruction

Teachers, Profs, Parents: Writers Who Care

A blog advocating for authentic writing instruction

Home About Research Briefs

Proposed R

by Anne Elrod
the U.S. Dep
colleges,...

Continue

Writers Who Care: Adv. Teachers - Professors - Parents

Leah A. Zuidema, *Dordt College*
Sarah Hochstetler, *Illinois State University*
Mark Letcher, *Purdue University Calumet*
Kristen Hawley Turner, *Fordham University*

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We have seen when a child abandons writing, to her.

We have seen the pride in a teenager's

and from countless
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Please Help You

Teachers, Parents, U



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Home About Research Briefs and Talking Points Resources Write for the Blog

Proposed Regul

by Anne Elrod Whitney,
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colleges,...

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Please Help You

Writers Who Care: Advocacy Blogging as Teachers - Professors - Parents

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From implicit curricula to planned pedagogies, writing lessons make a differen student writers—all of them, not just our sons and daughters—deserve the best p gets taught. Our personal experiences, our research, and the knowledge we've educators all compel us to believe that the best way for students to learn is thro

Because we believe so strongly that writers develop through authentic writing instruction - and because we see policies that drive practices away from these goals - we have decided to speak up and to speak out. The blog *Teachers, Profs, Parents: Writers Who Care*

Blog:

Writers Who Care
(<http://writerswhocare.wordpress.com/>)

Article:

Zuidema, L. A., Hochstetler, S., Letcher, M., & Turner, K. H. (2014). Writers who care: Advocacy blogging as teachers - professors - parents. *Teaching/Writing: The Journal of Writing Teacher Education*, 3(1), 81-89.

What is the WWC blog?

www.writerswhocare.wordpress.com

Teachers, Profs, Parents: Writers Who Care

A blog advocating for authentic writing instruction

[Home](#) [About](#) [Research Briefs and Talking Points](#) [Resources](#) [Write for the Blog](#)

Proposed Regulations Bad for Kids, Teachers, and Schools

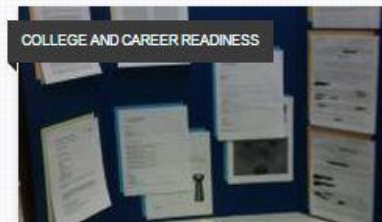
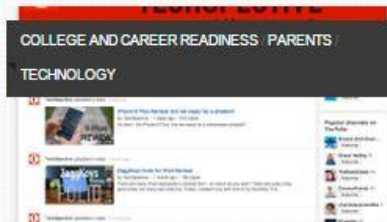
by Anne Elrod Whitney, Ph.D. Report cards may sound simple and harmless. But the "report cards" for teacher education programs that were recently proposed by the U.S. Department of Education are a bad idea. They, and the proposed new federal rules of which they are a part, could do tremendous damage to schools, to colleges,...

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Please Help Your

Teachers Plan Ahead



Why Teachers' Writing Matters

by Meg Petersen Children need to see adults writing. Cathy Fleischer's post provides excellent tips for ways parents can encourage their

What is *authentic writing*?

1. Composed for **real purposes** and is shared with **real audiences**.
2. Enables students to **learn by living the effects** of their composing.
3. Can include any genre—so long as the purpose is **more than merely “schoolish”** (Whitney, 2011).

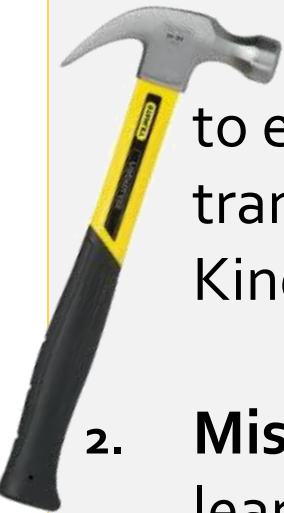


Whitney, A. E. (2011). In search of the authentic English classroom: Facing the schoolishness of school. *English Education*, 44(1), 51-62.

Why does authentic writing matter?

When writing instruction takes a reductive approach, students may:

1. **Misunderstand the purpose of writing**, seeing it primarily as a tool for testing or assessment—rather than a way to use God's gift of language to give form to creative expression, to explore and develop ideas, to experience growth and transformation, to effect change, and ultimately, to praise the King and do kingdom work.
2. **Misunderstand the process of writing**, seeing it as a routines learned by rote—rather than a discernment process that draws upon rhetorical and creative insight.



Why *advocate* for authentic writing?

The current education policy climate drives teaching practices away from authentic writing and toward reductive writing.



As WWC blog editors, we bring our expertise as *Teachers, Profs, Parents*:

- To contribute to the continued professional development of teachers across grade levels.
- To equip teachers, parents, and administrators as advocates for authentic writing in classrooms.

Who cares about the WWC blog's purposes and practices?

Writers Who Care: Advocacy Blogging as Teachers - Professors - Parents

Leah A. Zuidema, *Dordt College*
Sarah Hochstetler, *Illinois State University*
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We're writing teachers; we teach writing teachers. And we're parents of young writers. We can't help but notice how writing education matters:

We have seen when a child abandons writing because she isn't given the freedom to create beyond the formulas given to her.

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We have heard from countless college and graduate students who remember the teacher who had incredible impact on their relationship to the written word.

From implicit curricula to planned pedagogies, writing lessons make a difference—for better, or for worse. We're convinced that student writers—all of them, not just our sons and daughters—deserve the best possible writing education. We care how writing gets taught. Our personal experiences, our research, and the knowledge we've gained as parents, as teachers, and as teacher educators all compel us to believe that the best way for students to learn is through authentic writing.

Because we believe so strongly that writers develop through authentic writing instruction - and because we see policies that drive practices away from these goals - we have decided to speak up and to speak out. The blog *Teachers, Prof., Parents: Writers Who Care* (writerswhocare.wordpress.com) was born from our frustration with current mandates that limit teachers and students to reductive writing. We know what good writing instruction looks like, and we want to share that knowledge with an audience beyond academia. In doing so, we hope to redefine what it means to be an academic writer and to encourage others to contribute their knowledgeable voices to a very public dialogue.

The development of *Writers Who Care* brought challenges that we document here with the following purposes:

- For those interested in leading or participating in other advocacy blogging efforts, the window that we offer into our rhetorical decisions may serve as a roadmap to the kinds of choices and decision points that you, too, may potentially need to navigate. We hope that by sharing our rationale, our work may help you effectively connect with your desired audiences for the purposes you have in mind.
- For those who wish to join our collective efforts by submitting blog entries for possible publication on *Writers Who Care*, the behind-the-scenes background that we share may provide more nuanced insight about the rhetorical considerations that can help you to shape an effective entry. We hope to equip you to write submissions that fit well with the genre, audiences, and purposes for our blog, as we would very much like to be joined by many others in effectively reaching friends, neighbors, teachers, board members, administrators, and politicians who need to be informed and motivated to advocate for authentic writing instruction.
- For those who are writing teachers, writing researchers, and/or writing teacher educators, our reflections about our composing choices are meant to lay bare some of the writing work that blog writing entails. We seek to emphasize that blogging is indeed a significant form of writing that merits our attention, and to illustrate the complexity and potential power of blogging—as a genre, as a recursive rhetorical process, and as an authentic means of creating and reaching audiences for advocacy writing.

Any genre, any form of writing begins with purpose. So we, too, begin with ours.

Authentic Student Writing: It Matters

Student writing is *authentic* when it is composed for real audiences and real purposes. For example, asking twelfth graders to write and send letters to audiences they choose and for the purpose of trying to bring about changes that matter to them is more authentic than asking all twelfth graders to write about property tax hikes by sending letters "to the editor" with the teacher as the only reader. The purpose of the second writing activity, like the first, is to practice the conventions of a specific genre and rhetorical appeals to a precise agent. However, the second activity is merely a practice exercise, whereas a high school senior in the first example knows there is real potential for action from a respondent: a twelfth grader who writes to her principal to argue for more senior rights (e.g., additional opportunities for student leadership; options to leave campus for lunch) knows

Winter/Spring 2014



Advocacy bloggers



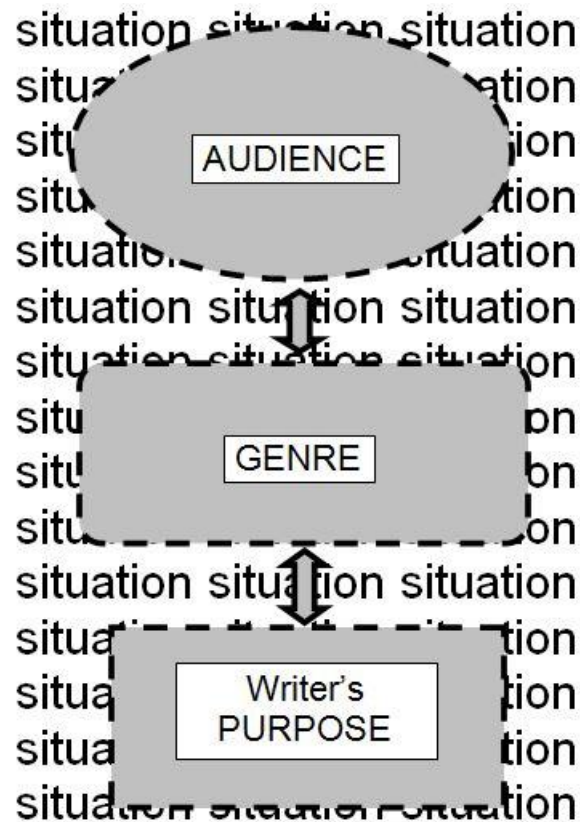
Potential WWC authors



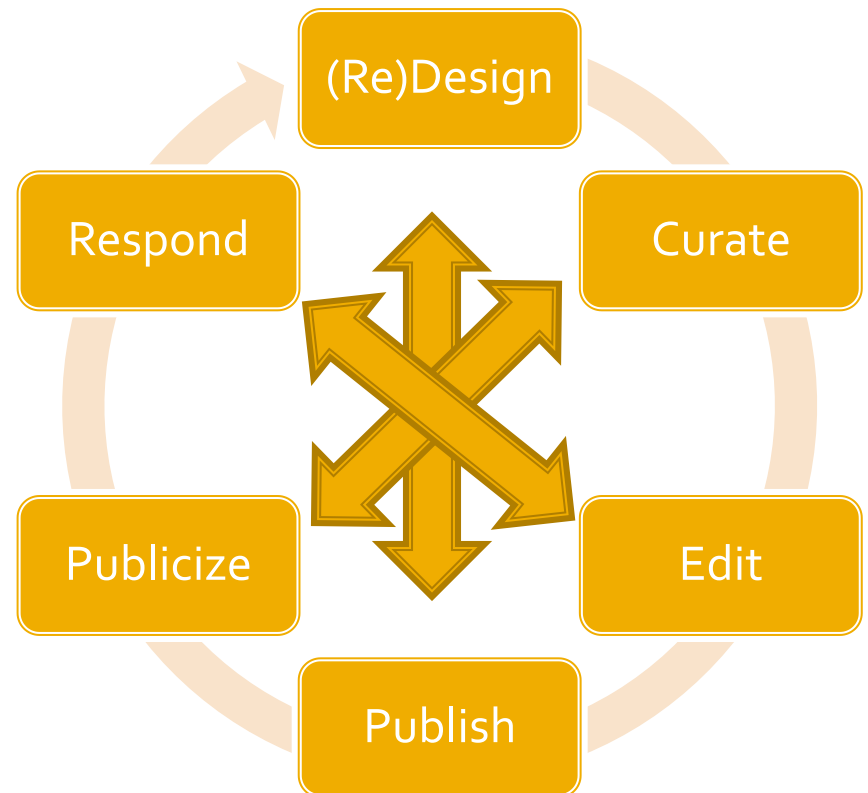
Writing teachers, researchers, & teacher educators

How do we “blog with care”?

RHETORICAL G.A.P.S.



A RECURSIVE PROCESS



GAPS behind the scenes: Example 1

<http://writerswhocare.wordpress.com/2014/01/27/does-bad-grammar-instruction-make-writing-worse/>

[Home](#) [About](#) [Research Briefs and Talking Points](#) [Resources](#) [Write for the Blog](#)

Does Bad “Grammar” Instruction Make Writing Worse?

drkhturner / January 27, 2014

By Patricia A. Dunn

Most students’ writing—in fact, most people’s writing—could use some improvement: in content, organization, coherence, style, and editing. However, many people continue to think that if only students received a dose of “grammar” instruction, their writing would be better. People can mean almost anything when talking about grammar: memorizing rules or perceived rules, reciting the parts of speech, punctuating someone else’s sentences, correcting spelling or usage errors on a handbook practice page, etc. In many cases the teacher drags out worksheets and instructs students to underline nouns and verbs or perform other tasks isolated from their own actual writing. These out-of-context exercises are not “writing” and, in fact, may even make writing worse.



Engagement, Not Estrangement

Archives

[December 2014](#)

[November 2014](#)

[October 2014](#)

[September 2014](#)

[August 2014](#)

[July 2014](#)

[June 2014](#)

[May 2014](#)

[April 2014](#)

[March 2014](#)

[February 2014](#)

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[September 2013](#)

Categories

GAPS behind the scenes: Example 2

<http://writerswhocare.wordpress.com/2014/10/20/my-kid-is-creating-youtube-videos/>

My kid is creating YouTube videos?

drkhturner / October 20, 2014

By [Jonathan Rochelle](#)

Within the past year, my 13-year-old son, Jeremy, started showing a deep interest in making videos. He was mostly inspired by other young talents he saw on YouTube and by a friend of his, who had started a business making videos for local sports and events.

When Jeremy jumped into online publication, I asked myself the same questions many parents do: If my kid starts a YouTube channel, or a blog, or some other creative outlet online, should I support it or kill it? Will it take time and attention away from school work, just increasing their already over-spent “screen time”?

My son’s experience with his YouTube channel that focuses on technology reviews and tutorials – [TechSpective](#) – has been an eye opener for me, and I thought it would be worth sharing why I have become a strong supporter of his work.



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[CCSS](#)

[College and Career Readiness](#)

CEE site meetings

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 Talking Points

[illegible]

 To do/discuss Monthl...

[illegible]

WTE Blog Logistics

What have the WWC editors learned?



BENEFITS

1. Shaping and engaging in a public conversation about education
2. Facilitating professional development

CHALLENGES

1. Creating an inclusive conversation (beyond academics, "the haves")
2. Recognizing professional contributions



We ask: "What is scholarship?"

Boyer, Ernest
(1990).
*Scholarship
reconsidered:
Priorities of the
professoriate.*
Princeton, NJ:
Carnegie
Foundation for
the
Advancement
of Teaching

Type of Scholarship	Purpose
Discovery	Build new knowledge through traditional research.
Integration	Interpret the use of knowledge across disciplines.
Application	Aid society and professions in addressing problems.
Teaching	Study teaching models and practices to achieve optimal learning.



What is *application* for a writing teacher educator?

Teachers, Professors, Parents

A blog advocating for authentic writing instruction

Home About Research Briefs and

Educating the Twelfth Grader: Terms: An Ode to Academics

Home About Research Briefs and

Proposed Regulations Based on the Twelfth Grader

by Anne Elrod Whitney, Ph.D. Report on the U.S. Department of Education are at colleges,...

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T/W

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Winter/Spring 2014



Please Help Your Teachers Play Hookey with Us

by Leah Zuidema Next week, a few thousand English and language arts teachers from across the U.S. will be absent from their classrooms. As parents with students in K-12 schools,

For discussion...

Application

Aid society and professions in addressing problems.



1. How might application in your discipline be **connected** with the ideas discussed today?
2. Which communities should we connect with? What do you see as **challenges or areas for caution** with application and advocacy?
3. How could we better **equip and encourage** professors at Dordt College in application and advocacy?

JAMES K. A. SMITH
**THE DEVIL
READS DERRIDA**
and other essays on the Christian
theological tradition